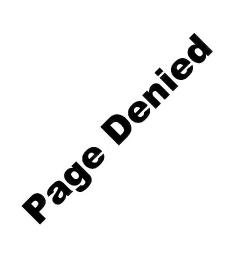
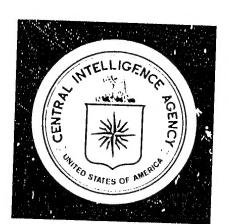
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

# Developments in Indochina

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14 January 1973

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## DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

#### NORTH VIETNAM

SA-3 surface-to-air missile equipment has been identified in North Vietnam for the first time.

#### SOUTH VIETNAM

Most of the battlefield action is concentrated in the north, with government forces taking the offensive.

#### LAOS

The situation in the Muong Kassy area appears to have stabilized. Enemy troops continue to prepare for a determined assault on Bouam Long.

## CAMBODIA

The government is making some headway in securing the banks of the Mekong near Neak Luong. Government rice stocks seem adequate for the time being but some problems remain to be straightened out.

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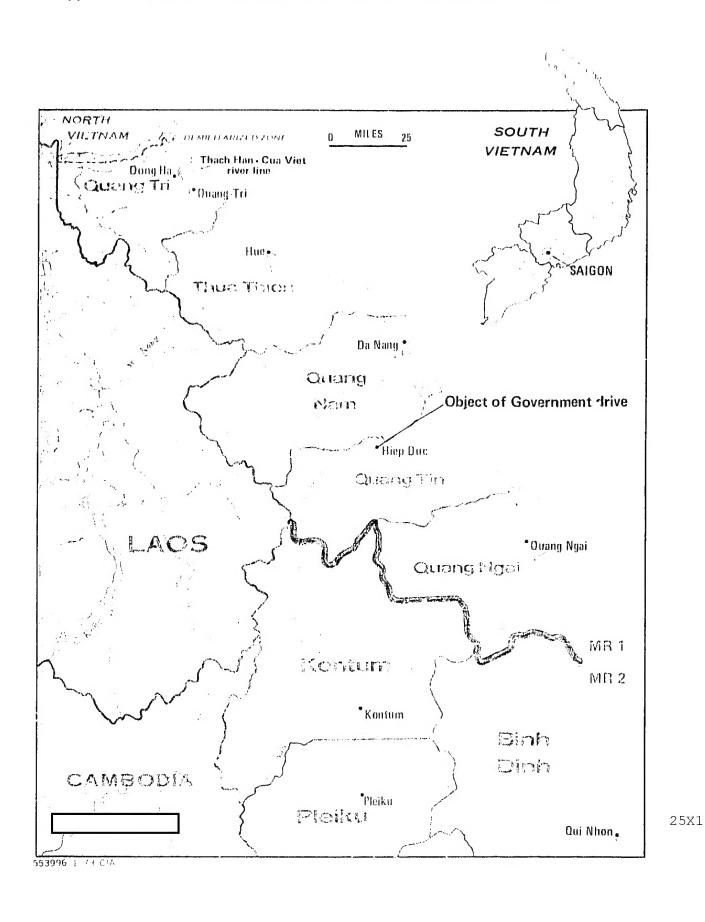
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Recent aerial photography shows what appears to be SA-3 surface-to-air missile equipment in North Vietnam for the first time. The equipment, spotted at the Dong bang transshipment area includes at least 70 SA-3 missile canisters. No SA-3 electronic equipment or signals have been identified and this sudgests the SA-3 system is not vet operational.  The Soviet decision to provide SA-3s to North Vietnam was probably taken some months ago, perhaps in connection with the trip to Hanoi by Marshal Batitsky, chief of Soviet air defense forces, in March 1972. North Vietnamese technicians would have had to undergo a training program, perhaps lasting up to six months, to learn how to operate the systems before the equipment was delivered.  When it becomes operational, the SA-3 will represent an increased threat to US aircraft flying over North Vietnam at low and medium altitudes.  14 January 1973	Approved For Release 2007/03/30 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001000090012-5	
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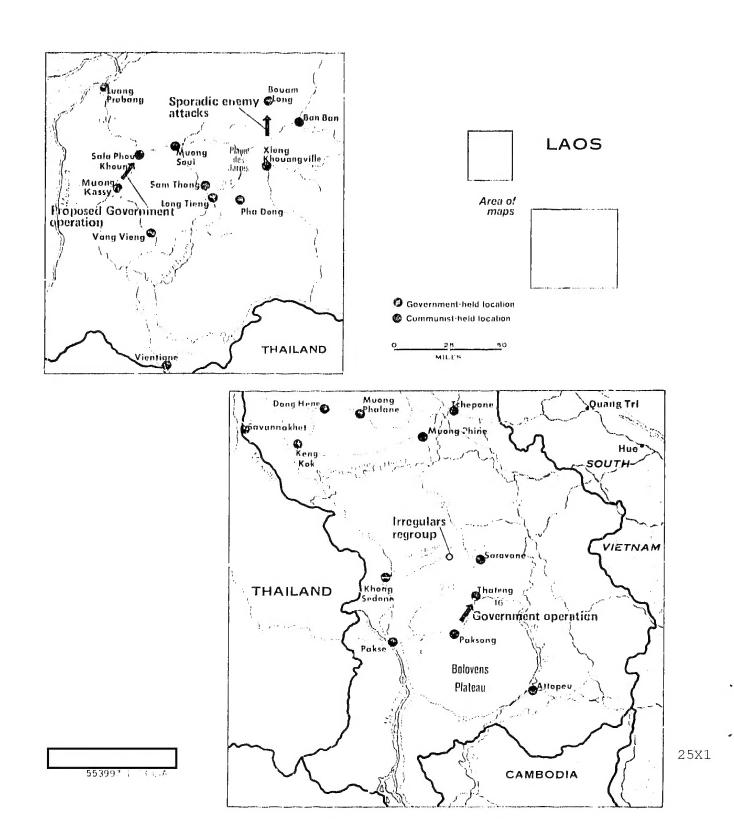
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SOUTH VIETNAM	
Sharp fighting erupted along the Quang Nam - Quang Tin provincial border over the weekend as the government pressed its campaign to recapture the Hiep Duc District capital. South Vietnamese regulars on 13 January occupied dominant high ground less than six miles northeast of the town, following a day-long battle that reportedly inflicted substantial losses on the North Vietnamese defenders.	0.5.4.4
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In Quang Tri Province, South Vietnamese paratroops are meeting little resistance to their operations along the south bank of the Thach Han River.	25X1
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# LAOS

Over the weekend Communist forces made no attempt to follow up their attack against Muong Kassy and the situation in this area appears to be returning to normal. There are still a limited number of Pathet Lao troops within striking distance of Muong Kassy, and government patrols operating some two to three miles east of the town clashed with company-sized enemy elements on several occasions during 12-13 January. government is moving ahead with plans to secure the Route 13 area from Muong Kassy north to Sala Phou Koun. Initial plans call for irregular reinforcements to be airlifted into the Sala Phou Koun area some time next week while government regulars will move overland to the north from Muong Kassy. Given the low state of troop morale, the defensive orientation of local commanders, and the limited resources available to the government at this time, it is questionable whether the government will be able to move swiftly.

North of the Plaine des Jarres, government defenders are continuing to rebuff North Vietnamese attempts to breach their lines at Bouam Long, but evidence continues to mount of a determined enemy effort to overrun this key outpost. Apparently respectful of the government's formidable bunker complexes, the North Vietnamese have abandoned a strategy of attempting to overwhelm the camp with frontal infantry and artillery assaults. F

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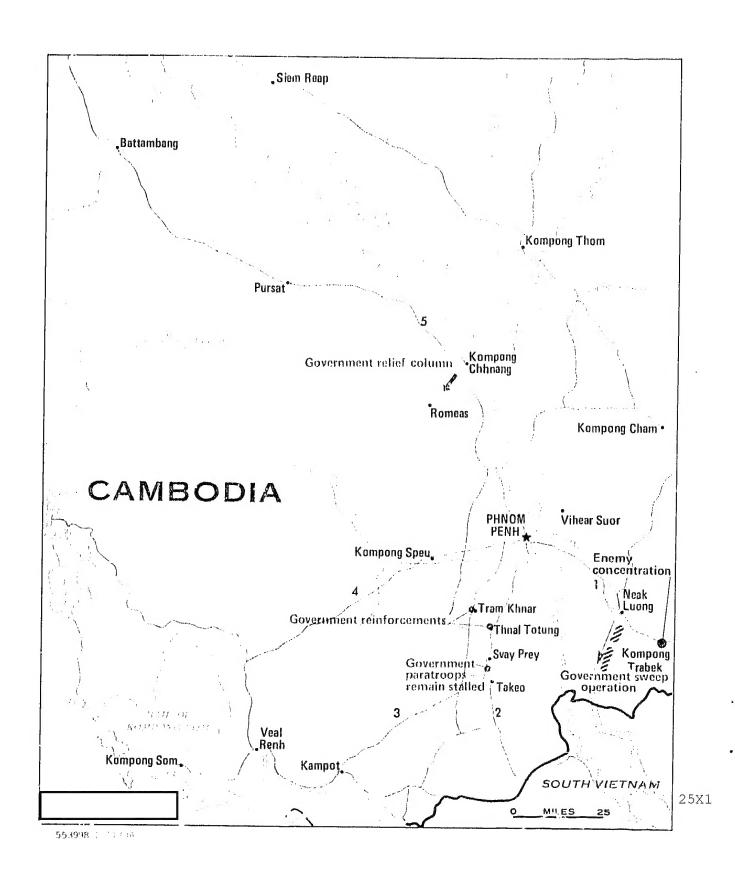
In the south, government forces retreating from the Saravane area have continued to move westward following renewed heavy attacks against their positions on 12 January. The government is now some 15 miles west of Saravane. The North Vietnamese may continue to pursue these weary units, since the enemy's objective appears to be to wear down government troops rather than capture terrain.

South of Saravane, the government is meeting with more success. It has secured key positions overlooking the village of Thateng immediately north of the Bolovens Plateau. On 13 January a three-battalion irregular force began moving overland from Paksong toward Thateng in an effort to consolidate recent government gains in this area.

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#### CAMBODIA

The government has made some limited progress in clearing enemy forces from the banks of the Mekong River south of Neak Luong. According to preliminary reports, a six-battalion government force encountered only light enemy resistance during a day-long push to recover a handful of government outposts overrun by Khmer Communists four days ago. Local commanders do not expect heavy resistance to their efforts to clear the river banks. They estimate that enemy forces are consolidating along Route 1 east of Neak Luong.

The government also has committed additional troops to its campaign to secure Routes 2 and 3 in the south. Three paratroop battalions from the government's general reserve force have been ordered into action to relieve the besieged garrisons at Thnal Totung and Svay Prey. Two other battalions have moved into the Tram Khnar area and linked up with government forces sweeping the area immediately to the south and west. This brings to six the number of battalions now operating in Tram Khnar.

Northwest of Phnom Penh, a three-battalion government relief force is moving toward Romeas in an effort to break a nine-day old Communist siege of this former government training camp. In recent days the government's position has become increasingly tenuous. Supplies have dwindled and the local commander was killed in action over the weekend.

# The Rice Situation

Cambodia's rice supply system is still beset with problems. but Phnom Penh's immediate needs are being adequately met by imports of US and Thai rice. Rice stocks in the capital have been gradually built

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up from the critically low levels of last September, and are now sufficient for about two months consumption. Several kinks remain to be straightened out, however. Rice distribution managers are having difficulty selling American rice in the capital. Although a premium grade rice, consumers find its new and different taste disagreeable and premer the more familiar imported Thai rice. The problem was probably aggravated by the reported poor quality of the initial shipments of US rice loaned to Cambodia by the South Vietnamese, some samples of which were found unfit for consumption.

Another problem involves the movement of rice from the seaport of Kompong Som to Phnom Penh. Truckers are reluctant to carry imported rice because of the low shipping rates paid by the government. Considerably more profit can be made hauling other goods, and rice is now piling up in Kompong Som's warehouses.

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